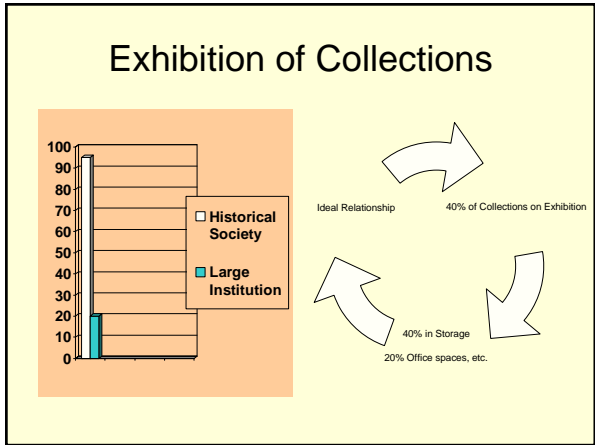
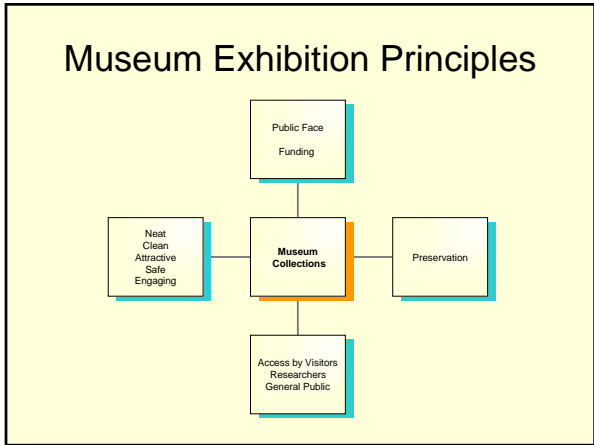
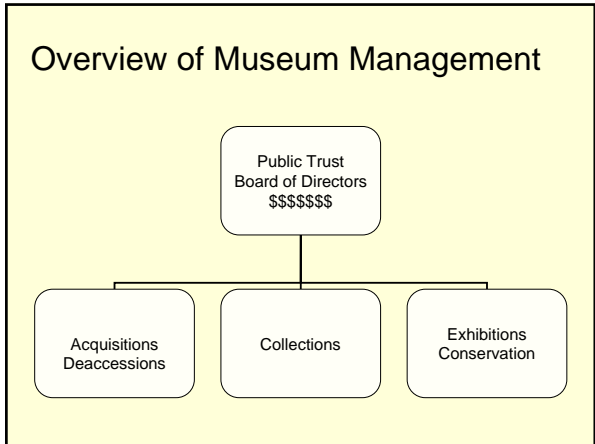


Exhibiting Museum Artifacts

Without Damaging Collections



- ### “Permanent” Exhibitions
- As collections grow, many small institutions increase exhibition space, but use attics, basements, or small closets to store objects
 - Permanent exhibitions cause damage to artifacts, and reduce repeat visits from the community

- ### If your entire collection is on display:
- The exhibitions will have a cluttered appearance
 - The exhibitions will look shabby over time
 - If there are any sharp instruments accessible to the public, this presents a danger
 - Any hazardous or dangerous materials will expose visitors

Exhibits Can Damage Collections

- Prolonged exposure to light causes fading and weakening of material
- Open exhibitions invite vandalism and theft
- Poor display techniques cause physical distortion, staining, scratching, tearing, and potentially chemical reactions
- Open exhibitions need regular cleaning, which places additional wear on artifacts
- Pest control is more difficult

10 Agents of Deterioration

- Direct physical forces
- Thieves, vandals, displacers
- Fire
- Water
- Pests
- Contaminants
- Radiation
- Incorrect temperature
- Incorrect relative humidity
- Custodial neglect

Light Exposure

- Lengthy exposure to ultra-violet rays causes weakness and fading
- Original photographs, textiles and watercolors can only be exposed to 5 footcandles for three months per year.
- Oil paintings can be exposed to 15 footcandles for three months per year.
- But, human vision requires up to 30 footcandles.
- Automatic sensors or light switches will decrease exposure.

Preservation of Objects in an Exhibition

- Objects need adequate support
- Support objects with inert materials
- Design exhibitions to deter theft
- Design supports that will not alter the shape of an object

What Not To Use

- Nails
- Pins
- Scotch Tape
- Masking Tape
- Painter's Tape
- Glue (except hot-melt on plastic)
- Unpadded mounts
- Alkyd paint
- Machine sewing on textiles
- Oil-based products including varnishes, paints, and clay
- Thumbtacks
- Safety pins
- Hooks or cup hooks
- Fish line
- Wire
- Varnish
- Sticky clay
- Wood or wood pulp products, especially chip-board
- Polyurethane, PVC
- Rubber or rubber bands
- Nylon

What to Use

- Cotton muslin (well washed)
- Unbuffered acid free cardboard and tissue
- Latex paint low VOC
- Water-based varnish
- Powder-coated steel
- Anodized aluminum
- Silicone rubber gaskets
- Fabrics, plastics, and foams made of:
 - Polyester
 - Polyethylene
 - Polypropelene

IF DAMAGE OCCURS

- Remove object
- Photograph and document damage
- Call a conservator

Always Have A Disaster Plan

- Take time to develop a Disaster Plan
- Review the plan regularly for new staff, volunteers
- Know where the main electrical and water shut-offs are in your buildings
- Keep disaster mitigation materials on hand: blotter paper, water-absorbing materials, etc.
- Keep people safe first

Exhibitions Development

- Overall exhibition plan
- Written Exhibition Policies
- Light levels
- Photography
- Use of plants
- Object rotation
- Acceptable materials
- Temporary exhibition/traveling exhibition guidelines
- ADA requirements
- Security measures

Exhibitions Planning

- Team consists of:
 - Curator who gathers information about the artifacts and conducts research
 - Designer who creates the visual appearance of the exhibition
 - Conservator who advises designer and mount maker in artifact presentation
 - Mount maker
 - Educator
 - Security staff

Things to Consider in Exhibition Planning

- Visitor flow
- Environmental risks
- Artifact rotation on a regular schedule if needed
- Ease of maintenance
- Time required for conservation if needed
- Time required for special mounts
- Time required for paint to cure (30 days)
- Lights can be changed easily
- Install sensors if required

Enhance the Visitor's Experience

- Use large, clear fonts
- Contrast paper and ink
- Black and white creates the most contrast
- Black on blue is most difficult for elderly eyes
- Labels could be slanted toward the visitor
- Make sure lights are on labels as well as artifacts

What is accessibility?

- Visitor flow
- Clearly marked emergency exits
- Compliance with ADA
- Fire protection
- Environment (HVAC)
- Security system
- Installation of objects